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HISTORIAN

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OF HANCOCK COUNTY

Bay Saint Louis, Mississippi

April 1997

APRIL HAPPENINGS

The April luncheon meeting of the Hancock County Historical Society will be held at 12 noon on Thursday, April 17 at the Kate Lobrano House, 108 Cue Street, Bay Saint Louis.

Guest speaker will be Keith Hardison. Keith is Director of Beauvoir and is responsible for many of the wonderful improvements we have seen to the property and its programs.

Subject for the talk will be "A New Phase for an Old Place". This will be an excellent way to learn about one of our Coast treasures.

Please call 467-4090 for luncheon reservations. Cost is \$6.00. Our maximum seating capacity is 60 guests, so make your reservations early.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Thanks to Dr. and Mrs. Edwin Hyde for donating the proceeds of their moving sale to the Society. Part of the money was used immediately for the completion of our much-needed second bathroom and the purchase of dessert dishes for our luncheon meetings.

Thanks to Kathleen Kemp for donating "The History of the Mississippi State Society Daughters of the American Revolution 1896-1996" to our library.

Thanks once again to Melinda Richard and Jim Bell for the beautiful rose garden that Gather Ye Rosebuds Society planted last summer and has maintained for the Historical Society. They are in full bloom this week and are a delight. Melinda and Jim, we appreciate your gift every day.

(Continued on page 3)



John Hancock

John Hancock's signature as it appears on the Declaration of Independence

HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORY

Only eight counties had been organized in Mississippi when Hancock and Jackson Counties were formed on the same day in 1812.

Mississippi was not yet a state when Hancock County was formed and David Holmes was Governor of the vast Mississippi Territory which included all of present day Mississippi and Alabama. James Madison was President of the United States. Included in the new Hancock County were all the lands later assigned to Hancock, Harrison, Pearl (later Pearl River) and Stone counties.

Hancock County was named for John Hancock, first signer of the Declaration of Independence.

Because land titles in this section were based on claims that involved twenty-three types of tenure, some of the best lawyers in the profession were drawn here. By 1825 Shieldsboro rivaled Gainesville as the County Seat and the Military Road that Andrew Jackson had laid out through the pine woods was bringing the town a substantial part of the back county.

The Shieldsboro post office was established October 11, 1819.

(Continued on page 2)

(Hancock from page 1)

Mississippi achieved statehood in December 1817 and in January 1818, the first act of the first Mississippi Legislature was the incorporation of the city of Shieldsboro. Thus Shieldsboro became the first incorporated city in Mississippi as well as the first on the Gulf of Mexico.

Shieldsboro took its name from Thomas Shields, an Admiral in the U.S. Navy who had received a Spanish land grant in 1789. His home was where the Mauffray's Hardware building is presently located, just south of Hancock Bank on Beach Boulevard. The town name was changed to Bay St. Louis by legislative act in 1875.

The Bay of St. Louis took its name from Louis IX, King of France (1214-1270). Louis IX led two crusades into the Holy Land, the first was in 1248 and the second in the last year of his life, 1270. He was canonized in 1297.

It was on his feast day, August 25 in 1699 that Bienville explored the regions around the Bay of St. Louis and named the area for him.

In December 1699 Bienville returned to the Bay and built a fort on the bluff. The location of the fort was near what is now deMontluzin Street and Beach Boulevard. Incidentally, this location is the highest waterfront elevation on the entire Gulf of Mexico.

Twenty one years later, a new fort was established to the west which was named New Orleans. Because of its deep water location on the Mississippi River, ships from Europe bypassed the Mississippi Sound.

For the next one hundred years, the inhabitants along the Mississippi coast were left to their own devices. There was no formal government whatever in spite of the shuttling of the sovereignties who "owned" the area during the 18th century.

There were no schools, no churches, no legal system, no government. All the inhabitants of the Mississippi-Alabama coast were French or Spanish and all were Catholic. An occasional priest from Natchez was sent down to solemnize marriages (after the fact) and

to say prayers for the dead.

After the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 and the subsequent revolution of 1810, the residents of the area declared it to be the nation of West Florida. For a period of 74 days the struggling young nation existed before President Madison proclaimed it part of the Mississippi Territory.

There were many early settlements in the county which may or may not still exist. The following are a few of them.

Ansley's date of settlement is not clearly defined but it was located ten miles west of Bay St. Louis and was established as a flag stop on the L & N Railroad. It was named for Mr. M. Emmett Ansley who was roadmaster of the railroad.

Catahoula was never a settlement, just a rural district located on a tributary of the Jordan River in the central part of the county. It once boasted a grammar school with three teachers.

Claiborne was located twenty-three miles west of Bay St. Louis. This settlement was first called Grand Plains when settled by John B. Saucier in 1712. About 1870 the name was changed to Claiborne for J.F.H. Claiborne whose plantation on Mulatto Bayou lay a short distance to the north.

Clermont Harbor is located two miles west of Waveland, Clermont Harbor was a flag stop on the L & N Railroad—boasting a post office and a small factory which made building supplies. Later a hotel and a few summer homes were added and it became popular as a summer resort.

Crane Creek was a country community ten miles southwest of Perkinston in the general community of Sellers School.

Fenton, a ghost sawmill town, was established on a road leading through the Jordan River Swamp about four miles east of Kiln. River steamers anchored here and unloaded their cargoes.

Flat Top is located about seven miles southeast of Nicholson and was named for a little log house with a flat roof which served as a church and school.

Gainesville was about ten miles north of Pearlinton. It was named for Am

rose Gaines who received a land grant in 1810. It was a prosperous town and was the Hancock County seat until 1853.

Kiln is about thirteen miles northwest of Bay St. Louis and was named for the immense kilns where the original French settlers burned charcoal to sell. Sawmills replace charcoal burning by 1870. The Hines Lumber Company constructed a fifty room hotel and a hospital. During Prohibition Kiln was the center of a moonshine industry. It is said that one boat alone brought 1,000 sacks of sugar a week to Kiln for the manufacture of its famous "Shiney".

Logtown, now extinct, was situated on the Pearl River about three miles north of Pearlinton. It had a population of more than 3,000 people. Its sawmill was alleged to be the largest in the entire world in 1930. It now part of the NASA complex.

Napoleon, six miles north of Pearlinton was settled in 1798. It was named for Napoleon's brother who camped there while trying to raise money to rescue Napoleon from exile.

Pearlington, nine miles southwest of Bay St. Louis, was named for the freshwater pearls found along the banks of the Pearl River. The place was once called Little Jerusalem for the proud class of people who lived there.

Santa Rosa marked the Mississippi side of Honey Island Swamp which was for many years a refuge for pirate bands as powerful, if not, as notorious as the Lafittes of Louisiana. The King of Honey Island Swamp, and most notorious of all the outlaws living there, was Pierre Rameau who was Jean Lafitte's brother.

Waveland was founded in 1888 when it was granted a charter as a municipality. L. H. Fairchild was its first mayor and Alfred Ulman was the first Treasurer. The town hall was built in 1893 on land donated by Jesse P. Coleman.

Westonia was a sawmill town, near Logtown, Pearlinton and Gainesville. Mail was delivered to Logtown.

Much of the above information was derived from *Hometown Mississippi* by James F. Brieger. Charles H. Gray

WILLIAM C. KIDD

We regret to announce that William Caughey Kidd, 82, of Pass Christian, died Friday, March 28, 1997.

Bill was past president of the Pass Christian Historical Society and was a special friend of our society.

(President from page 1)

The Pilgrimage tour on March 20th was a great success in spite of the continuous rain. I am deeply indebted to the hostesses who helped show Beachwood hall: Mickey Burns, Ruth Chambers, Karen Flores, Margaret Arnos, Barbara Zitzman, Beverly Vaughn, Lois Abrams, Bernie Iverson, Mary Catherine Ward, Lynn Kimble, Marie LeRuth, Beverly Danielson, Ginny Smith, Etta Williams, Maggie Hayden, JoAnn Mumme, Marlene Johnson, Jean Stanbro, Virginia Ludwig and Sally Lindsley. We had over 540 sign-in guests, all of whom were absolutely wonderful.

As mentioned above, we now have our second working bathrom facility at Lobrano House. The first year that we owned the house, we had zero working bathrooms. We made tea and washed dishes from a faucet on the lawn. Several months ago one of our members donated money for the fixtures, which we have had in place, but without pipes or drains. So, luncheon guest, we announce that the wait is over.

Mondays are once again our main "Work Day" at Lobrano. If you are free at any time on Mondays, please come by and join us, either for a few minutes or for the day. We need typists, porch painters, belly dancers or whatever your talent may be. Thanks to all of you who have helped in the past.

The Pass Christian Historical Society's Annual Tour of Homes will be held on Sunday, May 4 from 1:30 to 5: p.m. Six beautiful beachfront homes are being presented as a fund raiser for the Society. Admission is \$10.00 for adults, \$8.00 for children. This is a rare opportunity to visit in these wonderful homes.

Don't tell anyone, (**BIG SECRET REVEALED**), but Saturday, April 19th, from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., my friends Tony and Jo Ann Vaz are having an incredible sale of orchids and tropical plants at their home and greenhouse in Diamondhead. They, and several friends who also grow orchids etc., will offer their abundance of divisions, plants from compots or jungle collected specimens at prices from \$5.00. It is the *right* thing to do: turn *right* off 603 onto I-10, take the *right* at the Diamondhead exit toward the marina, turn *right* at the circle on to Airport Drive, and take the *right* to 233 Akoko Street.

We have just had a remarkable stroke of luck with our photo collection. Murella Powell, Geneologist and Historial of the Biloxi Library, has custody of a large collection of early post cards from a collection belonging to Randy Randazzo who generously allowed us to have copies made of those pertaining to Hancock County. We will now have enlargements made and add them to our gallery. Thank you Murella.

Charles H. Gray

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Domenica Carriere
Pattie Latino Craig
Lucille Creel
Harold & Caroline Battalora
Max H. Yuratich
Janet Dudding

COOKBOOK/RECIPES

Thanks again to all of you who have submitted your recipes.

This is a reminder to those of you who see me and say "I have some great recipes for the book, remind me to get them to you." Well, here's one more reminder. We're getting some marvelous recipes.

Don't be left out. Here's your chance to see your name in print. Send the recipes to Karen Flores, % Hancock County Historical Society, P. O. Box 312, Bay St. Louis., MS 39520.

PLANS FOR THE TRICENTENNIAL CELEBRATION AND A STATUE OF BIENVILLE BEING MADE

The Bay St. Louis City Council has passed a resolution in favor of commissioning a bronze statue to be built commemorating the arrival of Bienville in the Bay of Saint Louis three hundred years ago.

Leo Seal and the Hancock Bank have offered the park area next to the bank as a location for the statue which we feel will be ideal. It is in a central and highly visible area, overlooking the bay, at the highest location possible and is protected on three sides by buildings. Mr. Seal and the bank have also offered to provide a large part of the funding for the endeavor.

The Hancock County Historical Society will need to raise approximately \$15,000 to complete the work which will be done by selling "name" bricks to be used in building the base and whatever other devices we can think off. The statue will be dedicated on the Feast Day of Saint Louis, August 25, 1999.

LOBRANO HOUSE HOURS

| | |
|---------|--------|
| MONDAY | 8 a.m. |
| through | to |
| FRIDAY | 4 p.m. |

THE**HISTORIAN**

OF HANCOCK COUNTY

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Charles H. Gray
Edith Back

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THE BAY SAINT LOUIS BAY BRIDGE

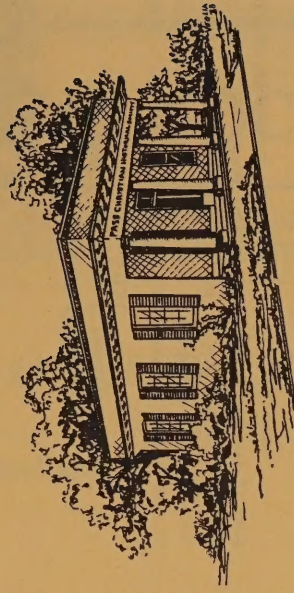
It was a great day for Bay St. Louis in 1928 when the ferry across the Bay of Saint Louis was replaced with a wooden bridge which was built at the cost of \$752,610.65 of creosoted pilings and timber. It was 14,445 feet in length and had a draw bridge for vessels entering and leaving the bay.

This project which was primarily the result of the hard work and energy of Horatio S. Weston of Logtown, then president of the Board of Supervisors, suddenly transformed Bay St. Louis from an independent and isolated resort town to the open western portal of the entire Mississippi Gulf Coast. It was located at present day Ulman Avenue.

At that time, 19 miles of Highway 90 to New Orleans remained unpaved, but this was reduced to one half mile by 1932. There were five miles of bridges between Bay Saint Louis and Pascagoula. This bridge was replaced in August 1953 with the present concrete structure.

Pass Christian Historical Society's

ANNUAL TOUR OF HOMES



*Pass Christian
Historical Society Building
ca. 1900
203 East Scenic Drive*

Sunday
May 4, 1997
1:30 to 5:00 p.m.

Donation
\$10.00 Adults
\$8.00 Children

TICKET INFORMATION

Prior to the tour tickets will be on sale at these locations:

MORNING MARKET
101 E. Scenic Dr. - Pass Christian

BOOKENDS BOOKSTORE
111 Hwy. 90 - Bay St. Louis

THE WALTER ANDERSON MUSEUM
501 Washington Ave. - Ocean Springs

BEAUCOUP BOOKS
5414 Magazine St. - New Orleans, LA
504/895-2663 or 800-543-4114

Tickets will be on sale at 203 East Scenic Drive (pictured on cover) in Pass Christian on Sunday, May 4, beginning at 11:00 a.m. Tickets can also be purchased at any of the tour homes during the hours of the tour.

Door Prize Drawing

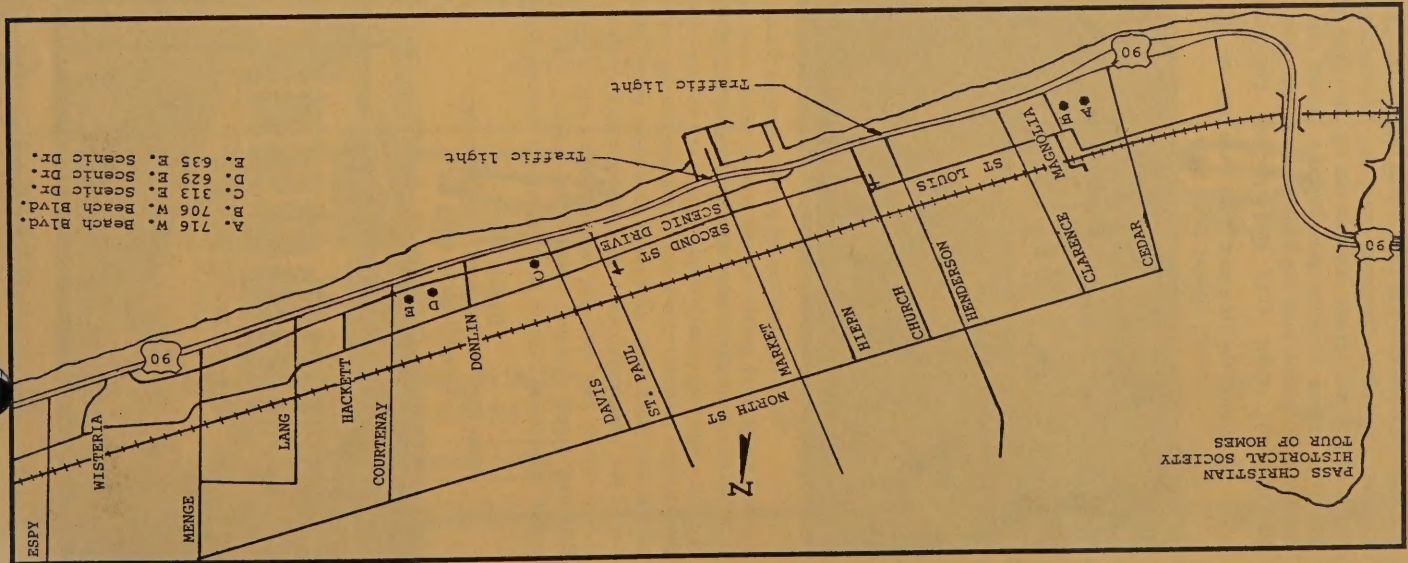
Register for the door prizes by filling out the stub of the tour ticket and deposit at one of the tour homes. You need not be present to win.

The Pass Christian Historical Society acknowledges with great appreciation the following contributions:

Brochures printed through the courtesy of Hancock Bank and Merchants Bank and Trust Co.

Photographs by William Clark.
Map by William Carlin.

The Pass Christian Historical Society and home owners are not responsible for any accidents occurring inside the houses or on the premises.

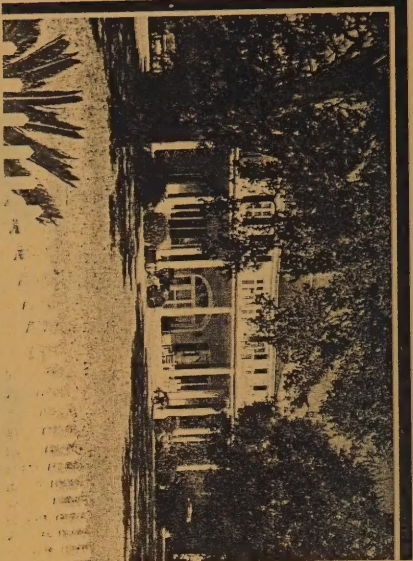


Pass Christian Historical Society's Annual Tour of Homes

1997 Pass Christian Historical Society's Tour of Homes

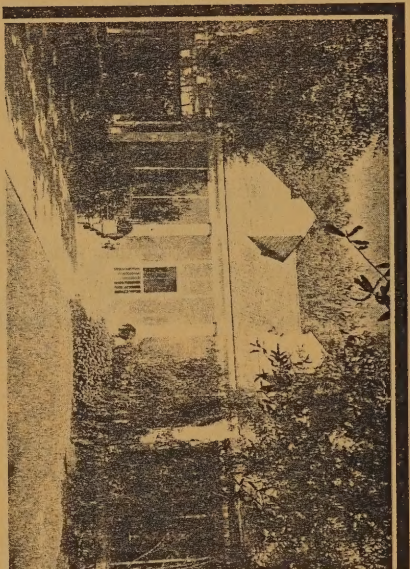
Pass Christian

is a charming antebellum seaside community facing the Gulf of Mexico and conveniently located on U.S. 90, sixty-five miles east of New Orleans and twenty-one miles west of Biloxi. A large portion of the beach front, as well as homes on Seal Avenue and Second Street, comprise the Scenic Drive Historic District. The District has been selected for inclusion on the National Register of Historic Places and has been recommended to the Department of Interior as a National Landmark.



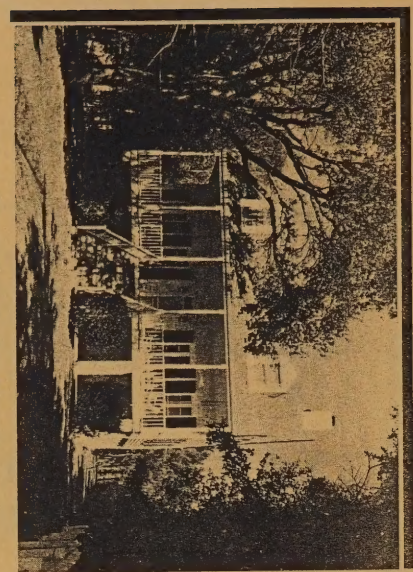
716 West Beach Boulevard
Mr. and Mrs. John P. Hammond
ca. 1850

This is a gracious Colonial Revival home that incorporates an antebellum dwelling. While little is known of its early years, it was owned by the Gilmore family of New Orleans for about 60 years. The present owners maintain the property as their summer home in the old tradition of life in the Pass.



313 East Scenic Drive
Mrs. Richard C. Bittenbender
ca. 1890

Built for the Adam family by C. Courtenay, this one-and-a-half story frame vernacular cottage enclosed an earlier four-room house with a central chimney. The pergola-like portico and side porch were added about 1930. The present owner has renovated the interior into a lovely and more spacious floor plan.



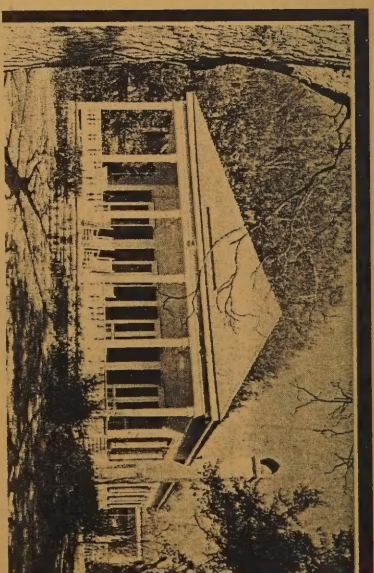
706 West Beach Boulevard
Mr. and Mrs. J. Herbert Williams

In 1985 this raised Acadian-style cottage with gable roof was built on the site of the Simpson home which burned in 1980. It was designed by New Orleans architect Monroe Labouisse, Jr., with adaptations by the owner. The builder was Robert Amoss. The house fits in beautifully with the older homes around it and takes advantage of the Gulf breezes with high ceilings and French doors.

Note: Park and enter on St. Louis Street, one block north of Highway 90

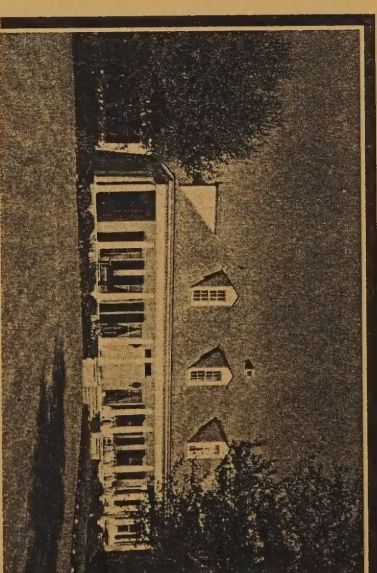
203 East Scenic Drive
— Pass Christian Historical Society Building —
ca. 1900
(pictured on cover)

A one-story stuccoed-and-scored brick, Neo-Classical commercial structure with portico in antis. Originally the Home Bank of Pass Christian, which was chartered in 1905 but only operated for a few years. The Bank of Pass Christian had the building in the 1920's but it too closed. From about 1940 until 1988 it was owned by the E.A. Lang Insurance and Realty Company. The east side was used at various times as a doctor's office, and later as the Harbor Shop. It was bought in 1988 by the Pass Christian Historical Society and is presently being renovated for use as their headquarters.



629 East Scenic Drive
Mr. and Mrs. William A. Kimble
ca. 1840

This charming one-story frame cottage began as a simple "Creole" working-man's home probably dating from the 1840's. The original house had only four rooms with a kitchen in a separate building. Two outbuildings and a two-room school house were added later. Subsequent owners connected the outbuildings to the house, enclosed galleries and added lean-to rooms out of proportion to the house. In 1990 the present owner undertook major restoration work to make the house more livable and the overall proportions more in keeping with the scale of the original structure.



635 East Scenic Drive*
Mr. and Mrs. Jan van Meerveld

Significant one-and-a-half story frame Neo-Classical Colonial with generous seven-bay inset veranda on three sides of the central dwelling with flanking wings. Coupled columns frame the entrance-way and the pair of entry doors with transoms. This lovely home was completely remodeled to its present state from a neglected mansard-roofed Second Empire dwelling in 1985.

*Retirements will be served from 1:30 to 5:00 p.m.

HISTORICAL SOCIETY SUPPORTERS

WE APPRECIATE THE SUPPORT THAT THE FOLLOWING MEMBERS HAVE GIVEN TO THE
HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY



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HANCOCK COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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